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Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. PAUL.

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ESSAY III.

ON THE SUPPOSED TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

IN a former essay we attempted to show, and we are satisfied that we were successful in showing, that the Lord Jesus Christ is, *in every respect*, inferior to the Father.—As an introduction to this essay, we will briefly recapitulate the arguments we then adduced. It was shown that the prophecies exhibited him as the Son of Abraham and of David, and that he was to be a prophet like unto Moses, consequently, a man;—that the Jews expected their Messiah to be a man;—that this was the view of his disciples, during his abode among them;—that after his resurrection, when they were endowed with supernatural gifts, they represented him as *a man approved of God*;—that Christ never said he was God, or equal with God, or that he possessed two natures;—that the highest title he ever assumed was that of *Son of God*, which implies derivation, dependance, and inferiority;—that to fit him for his office, it was necessary that he should receive miraculous gifts from the Father, which could not have been the case had he been God himself;—that he *increased in wisdom*, and therefore could not be omniscient;—that he was tempted, and therefore could not be God, “for God cannot be tempted with evil;—that in his last sufferings, an angel was sent from heaven to *strengthen him*, which would have been unnecessary had he been God and man;—that he had no *will of his own*, but came to do the will of his Father;—that he was sent from God, and therefore could not be that God by whom he was sent;—that he could *do nothing of himself*, but that *all* the power he had was *given* him of the Father;

—that he *received* and *obeyed* the commands of God his Father, *as we do*;—that the *doctrine* which he preached was not *his* but the Father's;—that he uniformly *prayed* to the Father, which is a demonstrative proof of his dependance and inferiority;—that the highest places in his kingdom were not *his* to give, but the Father's;—that in his last moments he exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” which could not have been the case, had he been God and man;—that he derived his existence from, and owed the continuance of it, to the Father;—that he denied that he was good, as God is good;—that he was ignorant of the day of judgment;—that he asserts that the Father was the ONLY TRUE GOD;—that “his Father was GREATER THAN HE;”—and that at the last day, he shall give up the kingdom to *God even the Father*, and be *subject* to him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.

It may be asked with astonishment, by the candid reader, how can this mass of evidence be resisted? It is replied, by the invention of the doctrine of Two Natures in Christ: one of the most convenient devices for resisting every argument by which the truth can be supported. To examine whether there is any foundation for this notion is the design of this essay. If we are successful in this object, we shall wrest this two-edged sword, from our opponents, (to adopt the military figures of some Theologians,) and leave them without either an offensive or defensive weapon.

That we may proceed on sure ground, we shall state what this doctrine is, in the language of the Creeds of two notably orthodox Churches. “The Son took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that *two whole and perfect natures*, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood were joined together in *one person*, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man.” *Article II. of the Church of England.* The Lord Jesus Christ, “in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continued to be, God and man, in *two entire distinct natures*, and *one person* for ever.” *Westminster or Presbyterian Larger Catechism*, Q. 36. In the next answer it is explained what is meant by the human nature;—“Christ the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a *true body*, and a *reasonable soul*.” *Id.* Q. 37.

The doctrine of these quotations, which is a fair representation of what is held by Trinitarians on this subject,

is, that our Lord Jesus Christ had the complete human man nature, a body such as ours composed of flesh and blood, and a rational soul like ours; and that besides these, he had the second person of the Trinity, who (say they) is God the Son equal with the Father, united to the human soul; and consequently incarnate in the human body as well as the soul; and that these two natures make one person in Christ.

Now this doctrine carries absurdity upon the very face of it. For if the human nature of Christ, (as Trinitarians term it,) be "*perfect man*," we all know that a perfect man is a *real proper person* and not a mere nature; and, on the other hand, if his divine nature be "*perfect God*," that nature must also be a *real proper person*, and so it is supposed to be by the advocates of this system, a *divine person*, the *second person* in the Trinity, a *person perfectly distinct from his human person*. The union then that subsists between them cannot be the union of *two natures* in *one person*; but the union of *two distinct and proper persons*, like the union of two partners in the same firm. And as the natures of these persons are as widely different as finite and infinite, the superior nature possessing the attributes of necessary existence and immutability, and the inferior, those of derivation and subjection to change, they cannot be so compounded and mixed together as to form one individual person, whose nature would be neither Deity nor humanity, but a mixture of both; a being who, personally considered, cannot, with truth or propriety, be affirmed *to be either God or man*; a being of whose nature we can form no conception, and for whom we are unable to devise any appropriate descriptive appellation.

If then the popular doctrine on this subject, when analysed and stripped of its unmeaning and unscriptural phraseology, is not the doctrine of *two natures* in *one person*, but of *TWO REAL PROPER PERSONS*, who are, in their natures, as distinct and different as finite and infinite, then it will follow that the volitions, the actions and the attributes of *the one cannot possibly be the volitions, the actions, and the attributes of the other*; nor can those of the one, with truth, be transferred, imputed, or ascribed to the other, but must ever remain personally and exclusively their own. The perfections and works of the God cannot be the perfections and works of the man; nor can the weaknesses, the sufferings, and the death of the man, be

the weaknesses, the sufferings, and the death of the God. If then these two natures, (as they are misnamed by Trinitarians,) are in reality *two distinct persons*, the question will naturally arise;—which of these persons is *the Christ* of the New Testament? They cannot each of them be *the Christ*, for then there would be two Christs; to which then, I ask, is the term to be applied?

The author of the *Athanasian Creed*, attempts to account for the *supposed* union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ, by comparing it to the union of the soul and body. These are his words,—“Who although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of manhood into God; One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.” The writer of these words possessed so much penetration, as to perceive the necessary and inevitable conclusion that would be drawn from his supposed doctrine of *two natures*, and therefore, he has guarded it by assertion upon assertion, and by an ingenious comparison, which he thought would silence all doubts, and prevent any farther inquiry. But his comparison is by no means just or fair. For the union of a soul with a body, (according to the common theory of human nature,) is only a union betwixt *two finite* things, which may be supposed to take place by the power of God, and to be preserved and continued by his perpetual agency. But a personal union between God and man, is a union or conjunction between what is finite and infinite, which can never be admitted; for it supposes, either that the immense, the eternal, the transcendent Deity is *made commensurate to a human soul*, or that *a human soul is elevated to the height of Deity*. It supposes, that “he who filleth heaven and earth, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain,” and “in whom we live, move, and have our being,” was incarnate or confined in a human body.

If Trinitarians deny this absurd and impossible supposition, it is in vain to talk of an incarnation, or a personal union, and their cause is utterly lost. If they admit it, the following monstrous consequences will follow; that a *supreme infinite* person, for a time (if not forever) ceased to be so; that laying aside his divine attributes and heavenly glories, he was conceived of a virgin, and was born as other infants are; that Mary was the mother of God; that

the Supreme Being was once a tender and helpless child; that he was suckled at the breast, and nourished by a woman; that he increased in wisdom and stature; that he was anointed with the spirit without measure; that he met with much trouble and opposition in the world, and at last ended his days upon the cross; that *the God of nature died, was buried, and was raised again* and highly exalted by another God or divine person equal to himself.*

* These consequences, so revolting to the reflecting mind, and so contrary to all our just conceptions of the nature and attributes of the Deity, although they form a part of the creed, and enter so deeply into the devotional exercises of Trinitarians; yet, when they are seriously pressed upon them, they are found to be equally revolting to their minds, and they appear to be ashamed or afraid seriously to contend, or even to admit that Deity really died and was raised from the dead. But when the controversial pen is laid aside, you find them admitting every one of these Consequences in their devotional exercises of prayer and praise. To justify these remarks I select the following specimens.

*This infant is the mighty God,
Come to be suckled and ador'd.*

*Our souls adore th' eternal God,
Who condescended to be born.*

*Deep in the shades of gloomy death
Th' Almighty captive prisoner lay.*

*Now, by the bowels of my God,
His sharp distress, his sore complaints
By his last groans, his dying blood—*

*When God the mighty Maker died
For man the creature's sin.*

Dr. Watts' Hymns.

It would be easy to quote many more similar passages from Dr. Watts, but I forbear, that I may have room in this note, to select a few from *Toplady's Hymns*, published by Dilly, 1776. Mr. Toplady is allowed to have been, next to Jonathan Edwards, the ablest defender of the Calvinistic system, and therefore it is fair to appeal to him as an authority.

*"Empty'd of his majesty,
Of his dazzling glories shorn,
Being's Source begins to be,
And GOD HIMSELF IS BORN."—Hymn 343.*

*"Whose wondrous love the Godhead show'd
Contracted to a span."—Hymn 190.*

What shocking ideas are these! Yet there is nothing forced or exaggerated in these conclusions. They are the natural consequences of a real and proper incarnation of the Deity. And if Trinitarians deny this to be a just representation of their opinion, and assert that notwithstanding the personal union, their second person still retained the proper attributes of Deity; and that God is said to be man, and man to be God only by a communication of idioms, that is, figuratively and improperly; then, the whole business of the incarnation will vanish into a figure of speech, and Jesus Christ will not be God upon their scheme, any more than he is so upon the Unitarian. He will only be a creature, guided, directed, and inspired, by the second person in the Trinity, in the same manner as Unitarians believe him to be by God the Father.

But again, the Athanasian comparison of the union of two natures in Jesus Christ, to that of the soul and body in man, will be found to be defective in another respect. For, the union of the soul and body may be properly personal, that is, may constitute *one person*; because it is not the union of two persons, but only of one person (the soul) to a thing otherwise without life, reason, memory, or free-will. The body is but, as it were, the garment of the soul, and is wholly actuated by it, and dependent upon it. But, in the pretended union of God and man, *there are two dis-*

"Th' incarnate Deity
Our God CONTRACTED TO A SPAN,
Incomprehensibly made man."—Hymn 344.

"See the Lord of earth and skies
Humbled to the dust he is,
And in a manger lies."—Hymn 343.

"See, in that infant's face
The depths of Deity."—Hymn 344.

"Depths of love and wisdom see
In a DYING DEITY."—Hymn 274.

"THE GREAT JEHOVAH DIES!"—Hymn 299.

These extracts contain *only* a small specimen of the manner in which our Trinitarian brethren express themselves in their most solemn moments. So long as they continue to sing such hymns as these, so long we shall be justified in asserting, that they believe that the *eternal Jehovah, was born, suffered, and died*: unless, indeed, they wish us to conclude, that they sing what they do not believe.

inct and very different lives, reasons, memories, and free-wills, which absolutely destroy the notion of a personal union; for that supposes but one life, one principle of reason, one memory, one freewill: For if those things which constitute a person are found more than once, there is no longer one person, but two, and consequently no personal union in the sense maintained by Trinitarians.

There is another absurdity, which it may be proper to notice, that attends the belief that the *second* person of the Trinity was incarnate, which arises from *their* very notion of the Trinity itself. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (say they) are three persons, all existing together in one individual or numerical essence, which is incapable of division or separation. And yet, notwithstanding, they affirm with amazing inconsistency, that *one* of these persons, the second, was incarnate, while the FIRST and THIRD WERE NOT. Now nothing can be plainer, or more certain, than this inference, that if the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have the SAME NUMERICAL ESSENCE, that either all the three must have been incarnate, or none of them could possibly be so. This is an argument that is level to every one's capacity, who will but open his eyes and acknowledge the force of truth, and not suffer himself to be deluded, and led away from the simplicity of the faith, by giving a blind and implicit assent to chimerical schemes of religion. "The force of this argument was so great," as one observes, "as to drive one Trinitarian to the necessity of affirming, that the whole Trinity was incarnate in Jesus Christ; and has obliged others, who were inclined to adopt the modal or Sabellian system, to be inconsistent with themselves, and to turn *Tritheists* in speaking of the incarnation."

(To be continued.) See page 121

PLAIN THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.

ESSAY V.

The first sacrifice offered, after the departure of Israel from Egypt, was that of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Fully convinced of the supremacy of the one Jehovah, and filled with gratitude and joy for the deliverance he had

afforded to Moses and the people of Israel, we are told, he "took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses's father-in-law before God." *Exod. xviii. 12.* It is evident these sacrifices had no reference to sin, but were offered as an expression of gratitude and joy, for what God had wrought. The words describe a feast in celebration of the divine goodness.

The first direction given to Moses respecting sacrifices, is *Exod. xx. 24*: "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thy oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and will bless thee." This text expresses nothing but what is in perfect agreement with the ancient patriarchal worship. For any thing that appears, the offerings were to be presented merely as an expression of gratitude and subjection to the Almighty, to whom they owed every thing, and on whom they depended for all things.

The people being required to offer the first of their ripe fruits, the firstlings of their flocks, &c. to the Lord, was on account of their peculiar relation in which they stood to him as their King; and was calculated to cherish a sense of their dependence on him, and was an expression of their allegiance and the obedience they owed him.

One great end of the Jewish sacrifices was the confirmation of the covenant which God made with them. *Exod. xxiv. 3—8*: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." The scene described

in this passage must have been peculiarly solemn and interesting. Sacrifices being regarded as the most solemn and religious confirmation of covenants among men, Jehovah, in consideration to the ideas and feelings of the people, adopted this mode of confirming his covenant with them. All the words of the Lord were solemnly declared to the whole assembly, then read over to them, the whole of the covenant was placed before them, and they, with one accord, gave their unqualified assent to it, and declared their determination to do all that God commanded; thus they voluntarily engaged themselves to the Lord, and bound themselves to serve him according to the tenor of the covenant into which they entered with him. Then the blood of the victim which had been offered was sprinkled upon them, and they became a party, not only in the covenant by their public acceptance of it, but also to its solemn ratification. This procedure was calculated deeply to affect them, to impress on their minds the obligations they were under to serve and obey God, and to give the covenant the most religious sanction they seem at the time to have conceived of; and the future repetition of their sacrifices would be calculated to bring the covenant, with its obligations, afresh into view.

No intimation is given that these sacrifices were typical, or that they had any further reference than to the covenant which they were used to confirm. The people could have no other idea of them than as connected with, and as a confirmation of that covenant. It ought to be observed, that these sacrifices were not the cause of their redemption, or of their being accepted with God as his people; for he had already redeemed them, taken them to be his people, and given them his covenant, and the sacrifices were merely the confirmation of it. These sacrifices were not called atonements, nor said to make an atonement, nor spoken of as having any reference to sin; but simply as relating to the covenant which God had made with the people. No sacrifices of atonement were offered until God had previously accepted of the Israelites as his people, and confirmed his covenant with them. Were it allowed that the sacrifices mentioned in the above passage were typical, they could not be typical of the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice, because they were not atonements, and had no reference to the making atonement for sin. The sacrifices which were afterwards offered,

and which were said to make an atonement, if typical, could not typify the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice, by which sinners should be made the people of God, by which they should be made acceptable and brought into covenant with him; because such sacrifices of atonement, under the law, were not offered until God had accepted the Israelites as his people, and brought them into a covenant-relation to himself.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the 9th chapter, speaks of the death of Christ, as confirming and establishing the new covenant, the gospel, in like manner as the former covenant, the law, was confirmed and established by the blood of the Jewish sacrifices; but it by no means follows that the latter were designed as types of the former; what the writer aims at is, a comparison between the one and the other, to show that both covenants were confirmed with blood: and if the old covenant was established by legal sacrifices, much more the new covenant was established by the blood of Jesus; that is, by his sufferings and death, viewed in connexion with his subsequent resurrection and exaltation.

The ratification and establishment of the new covenant by the sufferings and death of Christ, his sacrificing himself in bringing us the gospel, and to assure to us all its blessings and privileges, is a very different thing from his death being a satisfaction for sins, a price paid to God for our deliverance, and for the blessings of the Gospel. The former is the doctrine of the New Testament, and is consistent with the character of God, and with his free grace and mercy to mankind; but the latter is contrary to the New Testament, inconsistent with the Divine character, and subversive of the free grace and mercy of God to a sinful world. The Jewish sacrifices answered an important and highly valuable purpose, as they confirmed the old covenant in the view of the people, and impressed them with a sense of its obligations; but the death of Christ answers a far more valuable and more highly important purpose, as it hath confirmed the gospel, and is calculated to assure Christians of its promises, and to impress them with the obligations they are under to obey it. The Jewish sacrifices did not purchase the redemption of Israel from Egypt, nor induce God to become their God, and accept them as his people, nor procure for them the privileges of the former dispensation; but they were employed

as a confirmation of the words of God to them, the relation into which he had brought them to himself, and as the medium of their access to God under the law, and of many privileges with which he favoured them. So the death of Christ, though it did not purchase the mercy and favour of God, was the medium through which his mercy and favour to mankind were displayed; though not the procuring cause of our salvation, or a price paid to God for it, through the divine mercy it operated, in its connexion with the gospel, as the means of our deliverance; though not the ground of our acceptance with God, it was the medium through which we sinners of the Gentiles were brought nigh and accepted with him; though not a price paid to God for the blessings of the gospel and the hope of eternal life, it is that through which the blessings of the gospel and the hope of eternal life are assured to us. To say the Jewish sacrifices were of no value if they did not make up for the want of moral purity, and supply the place of moral righteousness, is to represent the confirmation and establishment of the old covenant and the keeping up a medium of intercourse between God and the people of Israel, as of no importance: so to say the death of Christ was of no value unless it was a satisfaction for sins, and designed to supply our want of personal righteousness, is to represent the confirmation of the new covenant, and the assuring all its blessings to men, the opening to them the glorious medium of intercourse with God afforded by the gospel, as unimportant. As the former shows ignorance of the nature and design of Judaism, the latter shows ignorance of the nature and design of Christianity; for Judaism was designed to preserve and promote the doctrine and worship of the one God, by the people of Israel, as a nation separated and devoted to him, and with a view to this great object the whole of the ceremonial was arranged; Christianity is designed to bring Gentiles as well as Jews to the knowledge of the true God, and nigh to him as his worshippers, to fill them with the hope of eternal life, and the expectation of a future righteous retribution. Both institutions were intended to produce moral purity and righteousness; but the latter is calculated to do it in a much higher degree than the former; both exhibit forgiveness for penitent sinners, and in both forgiveness is spoken of as flowing from the mercy of God; but neither provides any thing to be substituted in the place of moral purity and righteousness.

The Jewish sacrifices are to be viewed in connexion with the whole of the covenant which they were employed to ratify, and of the dispensation to which they belonged; the leading objects of that covenant and dispensation should also be kept in view; and it should be remembered, that as the sacrifices were a subordinate part of the Mosaic economy, they must have been appointed in subordination to the leading objects of the covenant and dispensation. Unless this course be pursued, it is likely wrong views will be formed of the Jewish sacrifices, nor will it be easy to perceive the wisdom of their appointment or their use. In like manner the death of Christ must be viewed in connexion with the new covenant, and the dispensation at the head of which he is placed; and the great objects of the new covenant and dispensation must also be kept in view, in order to perceive the value of his death, and the reason why it is spoken of as a sacrifice.

R. W.

[A subscriber has suggested to us the propriety of publishing a few extracts from the following sermon. After having read it we were so much pleased, that we have determined to publish it entire, not doubting but it will be highly acceptable to all our readers.] EDITOR.

A DISCOURSE,

By Dr. W. E. CHANNING.

II TIMOTHY I. 7.—For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

WHY was Christianity given? Why did Christ seal it with his blood? Why is it to be preached? What is the great happiness it confers? What is the chief blessing for which it is to be prized? What is its pre-eminent glory, its first claim on the gratitude of mankind? These are great questions. I wish to answer them plainly, according to the light and ability which God has given me. I read the answer to them in the text. There I learn the great good which God confers through Jesus Christ. 'He

hath given us not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' The glory of Christianity is, the pure and lofty action which it communicates to the human mind. It does not breathe a timid, abject spirit. If it did, it would deserve no praise. It gives power, energy, courage, constancy to the will; love, disinterestedness, enlarged affection to the heart; soundness, clearness, and vigor to the understanding. It rescues him who receives it from sin, from the sway of the passions; gives him the full and free use of his best powers; brings out and brightens the divine image in which he was created; and in this way not only bestows the promise, but the beginning of heaven. This is the excellence of Christianity.

This subject I propose to illustrate. Let me begin it with one remark, which I would willingly avoid, but which seems to be demanded by the circumstances in which I am placed. I beg you to remember, that in this discourse I speak in my own name, and in no other. I am not giving you the opinions of any sect or body of men, but my own. I hold myself alone responsible for what I utter. Let none listen to me for the purpose of learning what others think. I indeed belong to that class of Christians, who are distinguished by believing that there is one God, even the Father, and that Jesus Christ is not this one God, but his dependent and obedient Son. But my accordance with these is far from being universal, nor have I any desire to extend it. What other men believe is to me of little moment. Their arguments I gratefully hear. Their conclusions I am free to receive or reject. I have no anxiety to wear the livery of any party. I indeed take cheerfully the name of a Unitarian, because unwearied efforts are used to raise against it a popular cry; and I have not so learned Christ, as to shrink from reproaches cast on what I deem his truth. Were the name more honored, I should be glad to throw it off; for I fear the shackles which a party connexion imposes. I wish to regard myself as belonging, not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to stand under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following truth meekly, but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads. I am then no organ of a sect, but speak

for myself alone; and I thank God that I live at a time, and under circumstances, which make it my duty to lay open my whole mind with freedom and simplicity.

I began with asking, What is the main design and glory of Christianity? and I repeat the answer, that its design is to give, not a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind. In this its glory chiefly consists. In other words, *the influence which it is intended to exert on the human mind*, constitutes its supreme honor and happiness. Christ is a great Saviour, as he redeems or sets free the mind, cleansing it from evil, breathing into it the love of virtue, calling forth its noblest faculties and affections, enduing it with moral power, restoring it to order, health, and liberty. Such was his great aim. To illustrate these views will be the object of the present discourse.

In reading the New Testament, I every where meet the end here ascribed to Jesus Christ. He came, as I am there taught, not to be an outward, but inward deliverer; not to rear an outward throne, but to establish his kingdom within us. He came, according to the express language and plain import of the sacred writers, *to save us from sin, to bless us by turning us from our iniquities, to redeem us from corruptions handed down by tradition, to form a glorious and spotless church or community, to create us anew after the image of God, to make us by his promises partakers of a divine nature*, and to give us pardon and heaven by calling us to repentance and a growing virtue. In reading the New Testament, I everywhere learn, that Christ lived, taught, died, and rose again, *to exert a purifying and ennobling influence on the human character*; to make us victorious over sin, over ourselves, over peril and pain; to join us to God by filial love, and above all, by likeness of nature, by participation of his spirit. This is plainly laid down in the New Testament as the supreme end of Christ.

Let me now ask, Can a nobler end be ascribed to Jesus? I affirm, that there is, and can be no greater work on earth, than to purify the soul from evil, and to kindle in it new light, life, energy, and love. I maintain, that the true measure of the glory of a religion, is to be found in the spirit and power which it communicates to its disciples. This is one of the plain teachings of reason. The chief blessing to an intelligent being, that which makes all other blessings poor, is the improvement of his own mind.

Man is glorious and happy, not by what he has, but by what he *is*. He can receive nothing better or nobler than the unfolding of his own spiritual nature. The highest existence in the universe is Mind; for God is mind; and the developement of that principle which assimilates us to God, must be our supreme good. The omnipotent Creator, we have reason to think, can bestow nothing greater than intelligence, love, rectitude, energy of will and of benevolent action; for these are the splendors of his own nature. We adore him for these. In imparting these, he imparts, as it were, himself. We are too apt to look abroad for good. But the only true good is within. In this outward universe, magnificent as it is, in the bright day and in the starry night, in the earth and the skies, we can discover nothing so vast as thought, so strong as the unconquerable purpose of duty, so sublime as the spirit of disinterestedness and selfsacrifice. A mind, which withstands all the powers of the outward universe, all the pains which fire, and sword, and storm can inflict, rather than swerve from uprightness, is nobler than the universe. Why will we not learn the glory of the soul? We are seeking a foreign good. But we all possess within us what is of more worth than the external creation. For this outward system is the product of Mind. All its harmony, beauty, and beneficent influences, are the fruits and manifestations of Thought and Love; and is it not nobler and happier, to be enriched with these energies, from which the universe springs, and to which it owes its magnificence, than to possess the universe itself? It is not what we have, but what we *are*, which constitutes our glory and felicity. The only true and durable riches belong to the mind. A soul, narrow and debased, may extend its possessions to the end of the earth, but is poor and wretched still. It is through inward health that we enjoy all outward things. Philosophers teach us, that the mind creates the beauty which it admires in nature; and we all know, that, when abandoned to evil passions, it can blot out this beauty, and spread over the fairest scenes the gloom of a dungeon. We all know, that by vice it can turn the cup of social happiness into poison, and the most prosperous condition of life into a curse. From these views we learn, that the true friend and Saviour, is not he who acts for us abroad, but who acts within, who sets the soul free, touches the springs of thought and affection, binds us to God, and by

assimilating us to the Creator, brings us into harmony with the creation. Thus the end which we have ascribed to Christ, is the most glorious and beneficent which can be accomplished by any power on earth or in heaven.

That the highest purpose of Christianity is such as has now been affirmed, might easily be shown from a survey of all its doctrines and precepts. It might be shown, that every office with which Jesus Christ is invested, was intended to give him power over the human character; and that his great distinction consists in the grandeur and beneficence of his influence on the soul. But a discussion of this extent cannot be comprehended in a single discourse. Instead of a general survey of the subject, I shall take one feature of it, a primary and most important one, and shall attempt to show that the great aim of this is to call forth the soul to a higher life, to a nobler exercise of its power and affections.

This leading feature of Christianity, is the knowledge which it gives of the character of God. Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father. In the prophecies concerning him in the Old Testament, no characteristic is so frequently named, as that he should spread the knowledge of the true God. Now I ask, What constitutes the importance of such a revelation? Why has the Creator sent his Son to make himself known? I answer, God is most worthy to be known because he is the most quickening, purifying, and ennobling object for the mind; and his great purpose in revealing himself, is, that he may exalt and perfect human nature. God, as he is manifested by Christ, is another name for intellectual and moral excellence; and in the knowledge of him, our intellectual and moral powers find their element, nutriment, strength, expansion, and happiness. To know God is to attain to the sublimest conception in the universe. To love God is to bind ourselves to a being, who is fitted, as no other being is, to penetrate and move our whole hearts; in loving whom we exalt ourselves; in loving whom, we love the great, the good, the beautiful, and the infinite; and under whose influence, the soul unfolds itself as a perennial plant under the cherishing sun. This constitutes the chief glory of religion. It ennobles the soul. In this its unrivalled dignity and happiness consist.

I fear that the world at large think religion a very different thing from what has now been set forth. Too many

think it depressing, rather than an elevating service, that it breaks rather than ennobles the spirit, that it teaches us to cower before an almighty and irresistible being; and I must confess, that religion, as it has been generally taught, is any thing but an elevating principle. It has been used to scare the child and appal the adult. Men have been virtually taught to glorify God by flattery, rather than by becoming excellent and glorious themselves, and thus doing honor to their Maker. Our dependence on God has been so taught as to extinguish the consciousness of our free nature and moral power. Religion, in one or another form, has always been an engine for crushing the human soul. But such is not the religion of Christ. If it were, it would deserve no respect. We are not, we cannot be bound to prostrate ourselves before a deity, who makes us abject and base. That moral principal within us, which calls us to watch over and to perfect our own souls, is an inspiration, which no teaching can supersede or abolish. But I cannot bear, even in the way of argument, to speak of Christianity as giving views of God depressing and debasing to the human mind. Christ hath revealed to us God as The Father, and as a Father in the noblest sense of that word. He hath revealed him, as the author and lover of all souls, desiring to redeem all from sin, and to impress his likeness more and more resplendently on all; as *proffering to all that best gift in the universe, his 'holy spirit;'* as having sent his beloved Son to train us up, and to introduce us to an 'inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading in the heavens. Such is the God of Jesus Christ; a being not to break the spirit, but to breathe trust, courage, constancy, magnanimity, in a word, all the sentiments which form an elevated mind.

This sentiment, that the knowledge of God, as given by Christ, is important and glorious, because quickening and exalting to the human soul, needs to be taught plainly and forcibly. The main ground of the obligation of being religious, I fear, is not understood among the multitude of Christians. Ask them, why they must know and worship God, and I fear, that were the heart to speak, the answer would be, Because he can do with us what he will, and consequently our first concern is to secure his favour.—Religion is a calculation of interest, a means of safety. God is worshipped too often on the same principle on which flattery and personal attentions are lavished on hu-

man superiors, and the worshipper cares not how abjectly he bows, if he may win to his side the power which he cannot resist. I look with deep sorrow on this common perversion of the highest principle of the soul. My friends, the Most High God is not to be worshipped, because he has much to give, for on this principle a despot, who should be munificent to his slaves, would merit homage. He is not to be adored for mere power; for power, when joined with selfishness and crime, ought to be withstood, and the greater the might of an evil agent, the holier and the loftier is the spirit which will not bend to him. True religion is the worship of a perfect being, who is the author of perfection to those who adore him. On this ground, and on no other, religion rests.

Why is it, my hearers, that God has discovered such solicitude, if I may use the word, to make himself known and obtain our worship? Think you, that he calls us to adore him from a love of homage or service? Has God man's passion for ruling, man's thirst for applause, man's desire to have his name shouted by crowds? Could the acclamations of the universe, though concentrated into one burst of praise, give our Creator a new or brighter consciousness of his own majesty and goodness? Oh! no.—He has manifested himself to us, because, in the knowledge and adoration of his perfections, our own intellectual and moral perfection is found. What he desires, is, not our subjection, but our excellence. He has no love of praise. He calls us as truly to honour goodness in others as in himself, and only claims supreme honor, because he transcends all others, and because he communicates to the mind which receives him, a light, strength, purity, which no other being can confer. God has no love of empire. It could give him no pleasure to have his foot-stool worn by the knees of infinite hosts. It is to make us his children in the highest sense of that word, to make us more and more the partakers of his own nature, not to multiply slaves, that he hath sent his Son to make himself known. God indeed is said to seek his own glory; but the glory of a creator must consist in the glory of his works; and we may be assured, that he cannot wish any recognition of himself, but that which will perfect his noblest, highest work, the immortal mind.

Do not, my friends, forget the great end for which Christ enjoins on us the worship of God. It is not, that we may

ingratiate ourselves with an almighty agent, whose frown is destruction. It is, that we may hold communion with an intelligence and goodness, infinitely surpassing our own; that we may rise above imperfect and finite natures; that we may attach ourselves by love and reverence to the best Being in the universe; and that through veneration and love we may receive into our own minds the excellence, disinterestedness, wisdom, purity, and power, which we adore. This reception of the divine attributes, I desire especially to hold forth, as the most glorious end for which God reveals himself. To praise him is not enough. That homage, which has no power to assimilate us to him, is of little or no worth. The truest admiration is that by which we receive other minds into our own. True praise is a sympathy with excellence, gaining strength by utterance. Such is the praise which God demands. Then only is the purpose of Christ's revelation of God accomplished, when, by reception of the doctrine of a Paternal Divinity, we are quickened to 'follow him, as dear children,' and are 'filled with his fulness,' and become 'his temples,' and 'dwell in God, and have God dwelling in ourselves.'

(To be continued.)

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THOUGHTS ON FAMILY WORSHIP.

As religion is the best foundation of virtue, and furnishes the strongest motives to the performance of every social and relative duty, its importance in the domestic circle cannot reasonably be questioned. A few hints upon the subject may be useful to some of our readers.

If the heads of families have a proper sense of religion, if they cultivate habitual piety, if they regard the sacred scriptures as the best guide to Christian truth and duty, will they not be anxious that their children and domestics should do the same? But is it reasonable for them to expect this should be the case if they use not the means to effect it? Will not the reading of the scriptures, and the worship of God, in families, be calculated to excite the attention of the young to those sacred records, to produce and cher-

ish in them devotional feelings, and an habitual regard to God, especially if to these, at convenient times, be added verbal instruction, given with mildness and affection? Those who feel themselves the least capable of communicating religious instruction, have the most need to read the scriptures, and other devotional books in their families, if they feel any proper concern for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those intrusted to their care.

The happiness of a family depends much on the union and harmony of its members: for them to bow down together before their common Father and their God, to join daily in solemn acts of devotion, seems calculated to strengthen their union, to cement their mutual affection, and harmonize jarring feelings and passions. Devotional exercises, properly conducted, are calculated to form and preserve devotional habits, and these to give a composed, cheerful tone to the mind, to restrain the passions, sweeten the temper, and have a happy influence on the conduct of life; consequently to promote individual and social happiness.

If all the members of a family learn to set God always before them, to remember they are continually under his eye, every moment dependent on and accountable to him, they will not be negligent of their several duties; considering that in every thing they serve God, whose approbation is of the highest importance to them, and cannot be obtained without well doing, they will not fail to promote each other's good and comfort. Domestic worship, as it tends to cherish the daily remembrance of God, and revive in all the branches of a family, a sense of his presence and fatherly care, must, under this view, be highly beneficial.

Truly religious families, where the knowledge of the scriptures is cultivated, and the Father is worshipped in spirit and truth, are nurseries of the congregation to which they belong, and rear useful and honourable members for our churches. The heads of families have it greatly in their power to promote the cause of genuine Christianity, by promoting Christian knowledge and conducting pure worship in their houses; the doing this will also help to lay a solid foundation for the future worth of character and happiness of their children, and be contributing to the improvement of the world.

ORTHODOX DESIGNS.

[In our number for September we inserted a paper under this title, in which a fearful plan of the orthodox was developed. As a confirmation of that paper, we make the following extract from "Plain Truth," a spirited and well conducted periodical, published at Rochester, New-York. We need not add, that the subject of this extract deserves the attentive consideration of every friend of civil and religious liberty.] ED.

CONFIRMATION.

To the Editors of Plain Truth:

I rejoice that the veil has been rent, and a deep laid, and well-matured plot of the Presbyterian party, to acquire political ascendancy, has been stript of its secrecy and exposed to public criticism. The article headed "Murder will out," which you copied in your last number from the Christian Advocate and Journal, is true in every essential particular; but the disclosures are not so full as they might have been. I have been in possession of the facts in relation to this stupendous plot for nearly a year, and have often thought that duty to my fellow-countrymen required that I should make them public; but I have been deterred from so doing, by the fear that the boldness and magnitude of the scheme would excite doubts in the minds of some of its reality, and as it was conceived and nurtured in secret, I should be wanting in proof to substantiate the truth of my statements. But, happily, the veil has been rent, and I rejoice that there are more tongues than mine to proclaim the conspiracy, and warn my countrymen of the impending danger.

In the latter part of August, or fore part of September of last year, a travelling agent visited this part of the country, and delivered lectures to such as could safely be entrusted with the secret. He descanted at great length upon the present condition of the press in this country, said it was under the controul of men supporting no religious creed, that with this tremendous engine in their hands, they were enabled to give a wrong direction to public sentiment, and elevate such men only to power and office as accorded with them in opinion, &c. and concluded by proposing

That a CENTRAL SOCIETY be established at Wash-

ington city, of a character both *political* and *religious*; that a fund be raised to be expended in printing books, tracts, and newspapers; that the central printing establishment be under the management of nine directors, a majority of whom should approve as well the matter which should appear in the national paper, as the books which should be published; and that newspapers, bookstores, subordinate to the national institution, be established in all the cities and principal towns in the Union.

The books and papers thus published, he said, would not cost half so much as they now do; and, as the present publishers are not organized as a party, and cannot print so cheap, they could easily be broken down, and the country supplied with such newspapers, tracts, and books, only, as should be approved as orthodox.

He said the project had been heartily approved in every part of the country he had visited; that upwards of \$300,000 had already been subscribed, and that the Society would be organized, and commence operations, so soon as \$500,000 should be raised.

This plan he communicated under the strictest obligations of secrecy. It was approved by some to whom he submitted it, but not by all.

I do not know how much money was subscribed in this place, but I have been informed, that the great western pioneer of this religio-political party subscribed \$50.

By the proceedings of the Presbyterian convention which was held in this village on the 20th of August, you will perceive that some steps have already been taken to carry the above project into effect. That convention consisted of Presbyterian ministers from nearly every part of the state, and sat, I am informed, with *closed doors*.—Among the *published* proceedings, are the four following resolutions, dressed, you will see, in very *plausible* language:

“*Resolved*, That the purity, prosperity, and glory of the Church, at this time, demand a *Monthly Journal*, in which the more distinguishing truths of the gospel and doctrines of the Reformation shall be plainly exhibited and defended; and their paramount importance in the christian system maintained.

“*Resolved*, That the publication of a series of *doctrinal Tracts*, of like character with the *Journal*, is required by the exigencies of the times, which no *existing* institutions are prepared to supply.

Resolved, That the Rev. *A. D. Eddy*,* of Canandaigua, C. Eddy, of Penn-Yan, H. P. Strong, of Phelps, Wm. Wisner,† of Ithaca, S. C. Aikin, J. F. Schermerhorn, of Utica, S. Van Vechten, of Schenectady, John Frost, of Whitesborough, Dr. G. Spring,‡ of New York, Dr. David Porter, of Catskill, H. P. Dwight, of Geneva, Dr. Beeman, of Troy, Geo. S. Boardman, of Watertown, S. H. Hotchkin, of Prattsburg, Joel Parker, of Rochester, and Joel Keep, of Homer, be a committee to see the above resolutions carried into effect.

Resolved, That this Committee be requested to meet in the village of Utica, on Wednesday, the first of October next, at 10 o'clock, A. M. to devise means to secure the speedy publication of the above named Journal and Tracts.

“Signed, JOHN KEEP, Ch’n.

“A. D. EDDY, Sec’y.”

As my purpose was merely to corroborate the statement made in the Christian Advocate and Journal, I leave it for you, or your readers, to make such comments as the subject may suggest. D.

Auburn, Sept 11, 1828.

The above disclosures furnish a key to the memorable declarations of Dr. *Ely*, at Philadelphia, and of Mr. *Wisner*, at Utica and Auburn. To doubt any longer that the ultimate purpose of all the national and auxiliary societies, and schemes of “benevolence” of the Presbyterians, is to invest themselves with a power, co-equal with, if not superior to, that of our present civil government, would be like doubting the existence of the earth on which we daily tread. How can the people, then, with all this light before them, rest upon their arms? The exigencies of the times require not only watchfulness, but energetic action. The Presbyterians must be met upon their own ground.

* Who lately brow-beat the Postmaster at Canandaigua, for allowing an obnoxious handbill to be posted up in his office.

† The general agent of the National Union for enforcing the observance of the Sabbath, whose bold disclosures of the designs of his party, at Utica and Auburn, caused the great and patriotic meetings of the citizens of those places.

‡ The man who declared that the yellow fever in New-York in 1824, was a judgment of God upon the people for their electing *irreligious* men to office.

They are the invading enemy; they have declared that "the battle is commenced," and have proclaimed a general non-intercourse in business and in the social relations of life with the rest of their fellow-citizens. Painful as the duty is, a like non-intercourse must be maintained against them. Christians of every denomination, the true followers of Jesus, and the friends of republican government, must withdraw themselves from among them.—The party which aims at political rule, and a monopoly in every branch of business, cannot be actuated by pure religious motives. Their success would be a calamitous defeat of primitive Christianity. How important, then, is it that the people be up and doing!

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We have hitherto given twelve pages more in each number than we promised in our Prospectus, in the hope that our subscription list would justify this expenditure. Though our subscribers are much more numerous than when our work commenced, yet, if we wish to save ourselves from actual loss, we must in future reduce our paper to twelve pages, as originally promised, or issue our number only once in two months, containing twenty-four pages. We shall, for the present, adopt this latter course, as it will be more convenient to the printer, and save one half the postage to our country Subscribers. Thirty or forty additional subscribers, would enable us to resume our former practice, and to make our work more useful. We have no wish to make a profit by it; nor do we wish to lose any thing.

CONDITIONS.

I. THE CHRISTIAN REFORMER, intended to promote a spirit of Free Enquiry and the practice of Piety and Virtue, will be published monthly, and contain 12 duodecimo pages—but should the number of subscribers warrant it, it will be increased to 24 pages, in the course of the year, without any additional charge.

II. Price, ONE DOLLAR a year, to be paid in advance. All communications to the Editor must be *post paid*.

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